



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**Preserve the Children's Program Outcome Review Team**

Since 1994 the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's Children's Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT) has **evaluated the systems serving children in state custody** utilizing a **quality service review (QSR)** methodology.

**CPORT** provides an **independent, comprehensive, statistically valid, and unbiased evaluation of services to children and families** involved with DCS.

**CPORT** provides a direct service to children and families by **identifying risks and barriers, evaluating services provided, and recommending services and courses of action** to facilitate **successful, quicker permanence or exit from custody or services**.

CPORT is **not just a records review**. It utilizes a **quality service review methodology** and includes **interviews, typically face-to-face, with all relevant parties**:

- Child if age appropriate;
- Parents and other involved family members;
- DCS Case manager;
- Foster Parent of direct care staff in a group facility;
- School Personnel;
- Guardian ad litem, attorney and other legal representatives;
- Other service providers, counselors, therapists, CASA volunteer, etc.

When reviewers **discover** situations of **abuse or maltreatment**, they **immediately notify** child protective services or the special investigative unit. **Conditions** which do not rise to the reportable level, but pose a risk for children or families are also **reported to the region or facility** with the **expectation that corrective action will be taken**.

**CPORT Staff supports 65-70 percent of the QSR review process** as certified leads, coaches or shadows, and also by providing technical assistance, overall management, facilitating reviewer debriefing sessions, identifying themes, patterns and trends of practice and assisting in regional discussions for next steps to improve services to children and families.

CPORT provides **technical assistance to ensure consistency in ratings, adherence to the protocol and fidelity to the review process**.

As part of the case review and reviewer development process, **CPORT provides training in case management and best practice to DCS frontline staff, supervisors and regional staff.** Following each review, the FSW and supervisor participate in feedback sessions with their assigned reviewers to discuss case findings, develop next steps to improve case outcomes, and learn how to apply lessons learned to other cases. The following **comments** were received from **DCS frontline staff** in post-training surveys:

- “The reviewers gave fresh perspective--especially if the case manager has been working with the family a long time and not made progress.”
- “It helped me to understand my weak areas and where I need to improve all around.”
- “The reviewers that I had were great. Both were very knowledgeable and they made this experience a great one as opposed to other [trainings] that I have had.”
- “Reviewers had a great understanding of the Division of Juvenile Justice procedures and policy.”
- “I felt that they [the reviewers] were great and asked great questions and provided feedback appropriately.”
- “The reviewers did a great job, in understanding the case, questioning everyone and gaining understanding of the case and being able to see viewpoints and being able to see work that has been done and that needs to be done.”
- “Very helpful. They provided ideas on things that I had not thought of.”
- “It was very helpful to help determine proper placement options for the child.”
- “[I learned] that if the parents have issues that they not just only rely on the case manager, but that they have other formal supports.”
- “It gave me an overall insight of the case from a different perspective and the suggestions help me to come up with ideas for different resources.”
- “They made suggestions that were helpful in all of my cases, such as time management and suggestions as to how to be effective with the families.”
- “The feedback [about] the parents’ view was good to help my view of how I present to the families in tough cases.”
- “I’m glad you are reviewing this case. I do not know what to do with this case. We are kind of stuck.”

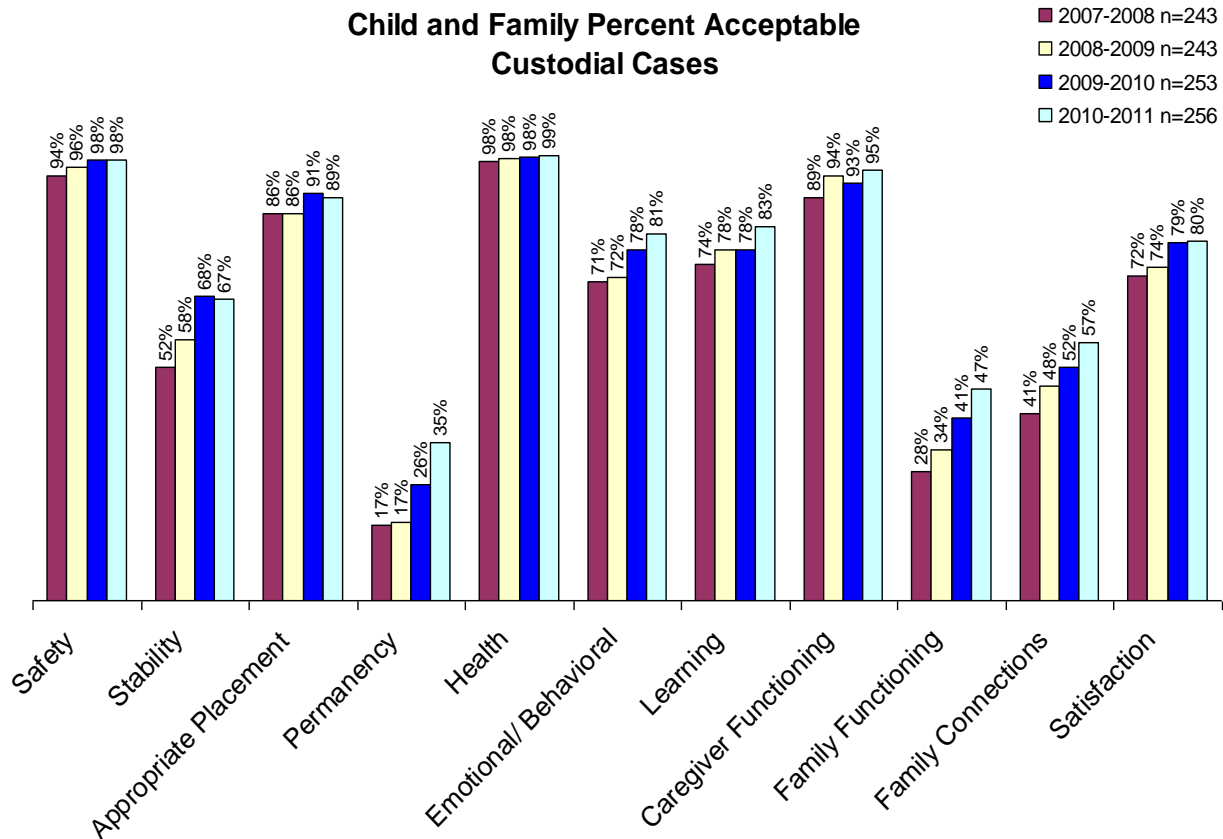
CPORT monitors reviewer accuracy through an **inter-rater reliability process.**

CPORT **conducts focus group discussions** to capture the context of the culture affecting practice in the DCS regions and Youth Development Centers.

**CPORT provides outcome-based, quantitative and qualitative information** regarding the status of children and families involved with state services related to their safety, physical and mental health and effectiveness of contracted services, which can be used for **risk and liability mitigation** and **expenditure reduction.**

**CPORT** collects and compiles information to address **broad systemic gaps** in services **that delay permanence, increase lengths of stay, and raise the level of expenditure, as children’s needs remain unmet.**

## CPORT Findings



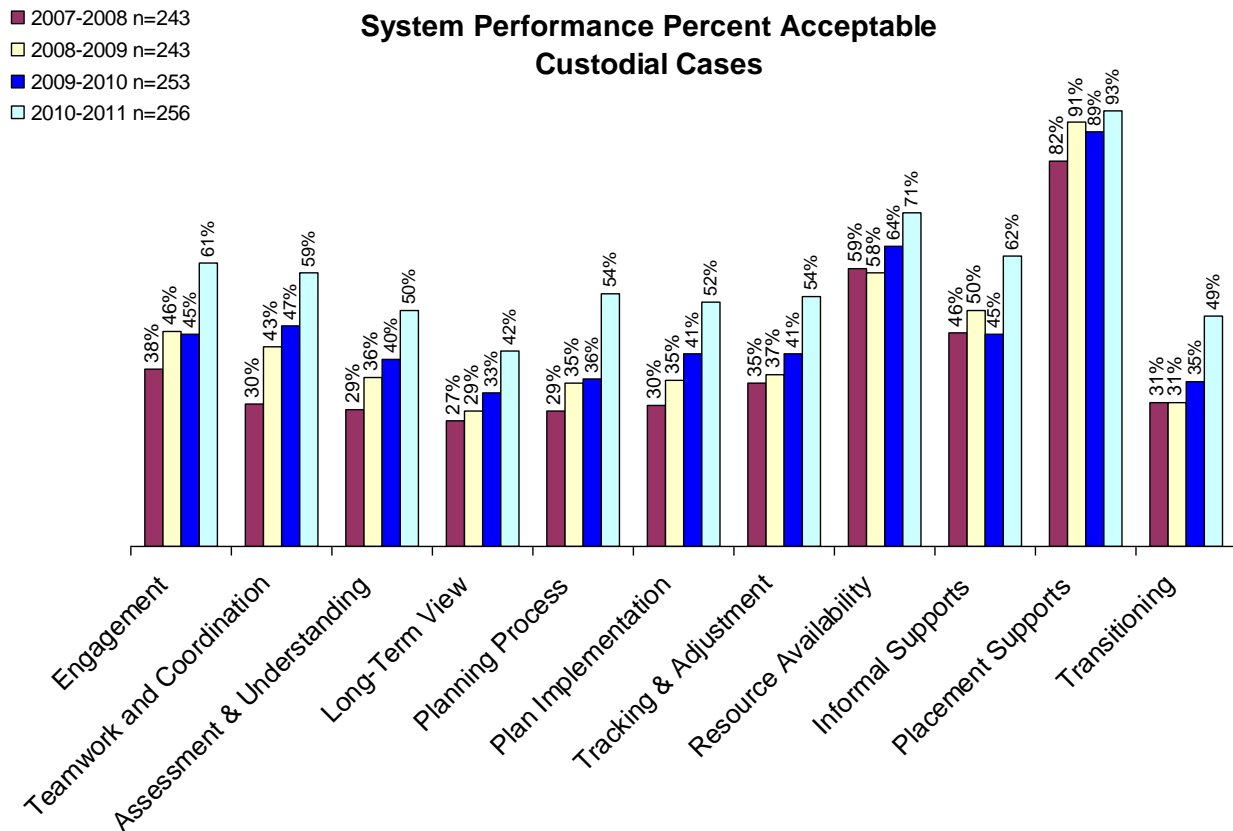
Fiscal Year 2010-2011 quality service reviews were conducted on **264 cases, 22 in each of the 12 DCS regions**, with a stratified random sample selected representative of the region based on age, race, gender, adjudication, and DCS case Manager/Team Leader.

Strengths included for almost all children:

- They were **safe** from harm (98%).
- Their **health and physical well-being** of children was adequately addressed (99%).
- **Caregivers** were adequately meeting children's needs (95%)
- **Most** children were making progress in education or a vocation (83%), the highest level achieved to date on the "Learning" indicator.

The **emotional well-being** of children in custody was adequately addressed for four of every five children at 81 percent, which of course means the needs of one in five were not being adequately addressed.

Areas of weakness included **Family Connections** rated **57%**, **Family Functioning** at **47%**, and **Permanency** at **35%**.



**The Department of Children’s Services has made progress in improving the system, but for most indicators, there is still opportunity for substantial improvement.**

**Availability of adequate supports for Placements** at 93 percent was the strongest system performance indicator.

The System **performed adequately only half or a little more than half the time** in terms of:

- **Engagement** of parents, children, relatives and other relevant parties (61%);
- **Teamwork and Coordination** with relevant parties (59%);
- **Assessment and Understanding** the strengths and needs of children and their families to facilitate permanency (50%);
- Identifying the **long-term view** for ensuring safety, permanency and well-being beyond system involvement (42%)’
- Putting into practice a **Planning Process** identifying the best path to safety, permanency and well-being (54%);
- **Implementing the Plan** that was developed (52%);
- **Tracking** progress or lack thereof in the case and making appropriate **adjustments** to changing circumstances (54%); and
- Helping children and youth make smooth **Transitions** from one placement to another, back to their families, to adoptive placements or to adulthood.